



By the King.

*A Proclamation for remouing the Staple of Woolls from parts beyond the Seas, unto certaine
principall Cities and Townes within this Our Realme.*



Auing of late bene earnestly petitioned by diuers of Our louing Subiects, aswell of the Growers and Breeders of wooll, as the Merchants and Traders therein, and Clothiers and Conuerters thereof, to take into Our Princely care and consideration, the due and orderly disposing of the woolls of this Our Kingdome; We by the aduice of Our Prince Councell, and Our Councell learned, haue maturely examined the Lawes of Our Kingdome in that behalfe made, and the Charters of the Staplers, concerning their power and interest in the Trade of buying and selling of woolls; And haue also taken into Our Princely consideration the convenientie of a middle hand betweene the Wooll Growers, and Conuerters thereof, that ioyning the respect of State & policy, with that of right and Law, we might resolve how the same might be settled most for the publique good of Our Subiects; And obseruing that Our famous progenitors, haue aswell by diuers Lawes, as by sundrie Charters made to the Societie of the Merchants of the Staple, prouided that there should be a continuall Trade or Merchandize of buying and selling the woolls of this Kingdome, either within the Realme or without, to which purpose diuers Staples haue bene by them erected and assignd, aswell within the Realme, as beyond the Seas, as the present occasion of the State had required; And finding that the Merchants of the Staple haue power and authoritie by the Charter and free grant of Our deare sister Queene Elizabeth of famous memorie, to keepe the Staple of woolls at Middelburgh, Bridges, and Bergen op Zoom, which is neverthelesse to be remoued and settled elsewhere within Our Land or without, at the pleasure of Us, our Heires or Successors, vpon nine moneths warning giuen vnto the said Staplers vnder Our great Seale; And being resolved that it most tendeth to the generall good, that the Woolls of this Our Kingdome shall be wrought within Our Realme, To which end wee minding to continue and establish a due and orderly meanes, aswel to furnish the Wooll-growers with several sorts of Chapman for their Woolls, and also for the fit and timely dispersing and disposing thereof into all parts of this Our Realme, where it may be best vsed; And for that of ancient time the whole Trade and vse of woolls within this Realme hath beene vnder the gouernement of the Maior and Societie of the Staple for the time being, (other then that which the Clothiers and Conuerters haue heretofore, and may still lawfully buy to conuert,) And that the said Staplers haue a government established, both by the Lawes of this Kingdome, and by diuers Char-

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ters of Our famous Progenitors, with sworne Officers, as Wooll-Winders, Porters, Packers, Searchers, Woolshuters, Correctors and the like, fit for the well vsing and ordering of their Trade, and for the preventing of all frauds and deceits therein; By Our letters Patents lately made vnto them, wee haue signified Our will and pleasure, That they the said Maior, Constables and Societie of Merchants of the Staple, and euery of them shall within nine moneths next after the date thereof, remoue themselues, their goods and seruants, and by vertue of Our said letters Patents, wee haue declared for Us our Heires and Successors, That the Staple of Woolls shalbe and is remoued from the foresaide Townes of Middelburgh, Bridges, and Bergen op Zoom; And that from thenceforth they and euery of them shall forbear to carry any Woolls out of this Realme, to the said places, or to any other place whatsoeuer beyond the Seas; And by Our said letters Patents aforesaid, wee haue assigned and appointed, That the Staples shall hereafter bee kept within this Our Realme, at the severall Cities, Townes and places hereafter mentioned, Viz. At the Citie of London and the Suburbs thereof, at the cities of Canterbury, Exeter, Norwich, Worcester, Winchester, & Lincolne, And at the Townes of Shrewsbury, and Oswestrie in the Countie of Salop, Northampton, and Brackly in the Countie of Northhampton, Cirencester in the Countie of Gloucester, Reading in the Countie of Berks, Kendall in the Countie of Westmerland, Sherborne in the Countie of Dorset, Richmond, Hallifax, and Wakefield in the Countie of Yorke, Ratesdale in the Countie of Lancaster, Tanton Deane in the Countie of Somerset, Deuizes in the Countie of Wilts, Coggeshall in the Countie of Essex, And Woodstocke in the Countie of Oxon. And wee haue likewise thereby granted and confirmed vnto the Maior, Constables and Societie of the Merchants of the Staple of England, and to their Successors, and to all and singular Merchants and others, whiche are or shal be of, and vnder the Freedome and gouernment of the Societie of the Staple of England, full and free power, libertie and Authoritie to buy, bargaine and contract all maner of Woolls in all parts of this Kingdome of England, and Domination of Wales, of all person and persons whatsoeuer, and the same to vster and put to Sale in any of the said Staple-markets, cities or Townes without any impeachment, restraint or condition in that behalfe.

Notwithstanding the Statute made in the fiftieth yeere of the late King Edward the sixt, or any other Law, Statute, Restraint, Provision, or Proclamation to he contrary in any wise; As by our said Letters Patents vnder our great Seale of England more at large appeareth. wee doe for Us, Our Heires and Successors, straightly charge, command and prohibite all and euery our louing Subiects, that none of them doe sue, Implead, or vere in any Court of Record whatsoeuer, the sayd Merchants of the Staple, or any of them, their wiues, Apprentices, or household seruants, or any of them, for or concerning buying of Woolles in any place whatsoeuer, to sell againe by Retayle or other wise, within the Staple Townes aforesayd. And if any Suit hereafter shalbe brought or prosecuted in any of Our Courts against the sayd Merchants of the Staple, or any of them, their wiues, Apprentices, or household seruants, for the buying of any Woolls, whiche shall be bought to the intent to sell againe at any of the sayd Staple Townes, vpon any Statute or Ordinance whatsoeuer, made against Ingrossing and buying of Woolles, to the intent to sell them againe: Then and so often wee doe by these presents, for Us, our Heires and Successors, will, charge and require all and euery the Judges and Justices of Us, our Heires and Successors, of all and euery our Courts, where any such Suite shalbe brought and prosecuted, and the Barons of the Exchequer of Us, our Heires and Successors, so soone as they, or any of them shalbe truely certified, that the partie sued is a Merchant of the Staple, or wife, Apprentice, or household seruant to a Merchant of the Staple: They, and euery of them the sayd Judges, Justices and Barons of Us, our Heires or Successors, shall vse and employ the vttermost of their power and authoritie, and take all courses, and doe all things whiche may stand with Law and Justice, for the speedie stopping and repressing of all such Suits and troubles against the sayd Merchants of the Staple, or any of them, their wiues, apprentices, or household seruants of them, or any of them, for buying and selling

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of Wooll as foresaide. And We doe also hereby reuoke, and disannull all Licences, Powers, and Authorities which haue bene gauen, or may be pretended to be given for the buying of Wooll within this Land, either for to Ship to any of His Maesties Islands, or to sell againe vnconverted, Except such as haue bene gauen to the Merchants of the Staple: And doe hereby straightly charge and command, that the severall Statutes in that behalfe made against all others shalbe put in execution: And do inhibite all others vpon paine of Our displeasure, to buy or contract for any Wooll to sell againe vnwrought: And further, to prevent and reforme all frauds and abuses heretofore practised by Glouers and Felmongers in the vittering of their Fell-Wools, We wil and ordaine, and straightly charge and command all Felmongers, and euery of them, which doe, or shall inhabite within twelue miles of any of the said Staple Markets, Cities, or Townes before limited and assigned, That they and euery of them shall from time to time put to sale all sorts of their Fell-Wools, at some, or one of the said Staple Markets or Townes, and not elsewhere, there to be viewed, proved, weighed, and registered by some of the Officers and Ministers of the Staple. And to that ende and purpose, that a due and orderly gouernment may be established and continued at the Staple Townes aforesaide, both for Weighing, prouing, searching, and disposing of all sorts of the Woolles of this Our Realme, as may tend most to the welfare of all Our Subjects: Our will and pleasure is, That the Maior of the Staple for the time being, shall appoint some one of the Societie to attend the Lords of Our Princie Counsell for their Direction from time to time, whensoeuer they shalbe commanded for that purpose.

Provided neverthelesse, that the Clothiers and Dealers in New Draperies, or any other naturall borne Subjects, that shall buy to conuert into Manufactures, shall not bee barred from buying immediatly at the hands of the Wooll-grower, Wooll fit for their vse; And also that the Dealers in New Draperies and Stuffles, who doe not vse the whole Fleece of the Woolles they buy, and haue vsed to sell the rest to the Clothiers, shal and may continue the same vsage, as formerly they haue done, so as they sell the same at the Staple Markets, there to be viewed, weighed, and registered by the Officers and Ministers of the Staple.

Giuen at Burley on the Hill the foure and twentieth day of March, in the fifteenth yeere of Our Raigne of Great Britaine, France and Ireland. 1616.

God sauе the King.



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ANNO M. D. C. XVI.